

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the background of the research will be elaborated. Specifications of research questions as well as purposes of the studies will also be included. Furthermore, this chapter will also reveal significance of studies, clarification of terms, research methodology and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of four language skills that expected to be acquired by students who learn English in school in Indonesia. The ability to read in English as a foreign language in Indonesia is fundamental for the students in secondary school. Reading skill is considered important because it will be the base for productive skills such as writing and speaking. As said by Brown (2001), reading activity will give the students model for them when they need to produce the language (in written or spoken text). That is why the students need to be skilful in reading to boost their ability in other language skills. Moreover, As Anderson (2003) has argued, the mastery of reading skill could help ESL/EFL learners achieve success not only in English learning but also in other content-based classes where English reading proficiency was required.

However, according to the study held by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which was funded by The International Association for the Evaluation Achievement, it is shown that the Indonesian students' proficiency in reading is the fourth lowest from 45 countries. Those facts show that the students' ability to read is still low. Moreover, they face more difficulties when they face the reading material in English, which is not their first language. When reading, many students still face difficulties that cause them to face failure in comprehending the text they read.

There are many factors that affect English reading proficiency as foreign language such as learning motivation, social environment, prior experience, and reading strategies (Onovughe & Hannah, 2011). The use of reading strategies is

regarded as being conducive to successful reading comprehension despite the complex nature of the reading process, which invokes both the L2 reader's language ability and reading ability (Alderson, 1984; cited in Zhang, 2009).

Onovughe and Hannah (2011) argue that certain strategies are used by students to repair comprehension failure, including reading slowly and carefully, controlling the reading rate, rereading, pausing to reflect on the reading, and reading text aloud. Many recent studies have shown that reading strategies and the awareness to use them become one of the most important factors that affect the readers' comprehension.

The awareness to use cognitive strategies in order to achieve comprehension is defined as metacognition. According to Flavell (1979), metacognition is an individual's knowledge about the cognitive processes and his or her ability to manage the use of those strategies to maximize their learning process.

Baker and Brown (1980) describe metacognition in reading as the awareness of people's own reading process. Metacognitive strategies include readers' self-awareness of their reading comprehension, their evaluation of cognitive demands of reading tasks, and their choice of specific cognitive reading strategies based on text difficulty, situational constraints and the readers' own cognitive abilities (Hamdan et al., 2010).

Metacognitive processes have been understood to play an essential part in achieving comprehension (Phan, 2006). Many studies have addressed the positive effects of utilizing metacognitive strategies in the reading process. They illustrate some positive relationship between the metacognition and reading comprehension. Research on metacognition and reading has shown that when faced with reading difficulties in reading comprehension, learners tend to use some metacognitive strategies to cope with these difficulties (Wen, 2003).

Metacognition has received considerable attention among researchers over decades. Its significant role in reading comprehension has also been widely recognized. Previous studies have indicated that metacognitive awareness has

great importance for improving reading performance (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Zhang & Wu, 2009).

Based on the facts, this study intended to investigate the metacognitive knowledge and regulation of the students in senior high school. It is considered important to be explored because as Macaro (2001; cited in Cahyono & Widiati, 2006) suggests, the teachers can be better in understanding the students' learning needs and adjust teaching procedures if they have more information about their students, in this case is their metacognition.

Moreover, this study intended to look at the differences of metacognitive strategy usage between the low-achiever, medium-achiever and high-achiever students. The main reason for the investigation is to observe which metacognitive skills are chosen by the three groups and whether there are some differences in the choice of the metacognitive strategies based on the students' achievement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. Which metacognitive knowledge and regulation are used by the students?
2. Which metacognitive knowledge and regulation are used by the students with high-, medium- and low-achievements in English?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the students' metacognition in reading academic texts and whether students with high-, medium- and low-achievement use it differently in reading process.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The study focused on the students' metacognition in reading comprehension which includes metacognition knowledge and metacognition regulation. The study investigated the nature of the metacognition used by the students in their academic reading, but it does not include other reading materials.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Viewed from the theoretical perspective, this study is expected to give some contribution to the enrichment of the literature of metacognition in language learning, especially in Indonesia. Moreover, it is also expected that this study will give insights and raise awareness regarding metacognition theories in language learning for both language practitioners and language teachers. From practical perspective, this study is expected to give a promising contribution in the reading strategies instructions in learning process.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

Reading strategies is the deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode texts, understand words, and construct meanings of text (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008).

Metacognition refers to an individual's knowledge about the cognitive processes and his or her ability to manage the use of appropriate processes to maximize learning (Flavell, 1979).

Reading comprehension refers to the process of making meaning from text (Woolley, 2011). It is the process of understanding the contents of the text and to excerpt meaning from it.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is presented into five chapters, as follow:

1. Abstract

This section functions as summary of the paper presenting brief information about the content that will be elaborated further in the next sections.

2. Introduction

This chapter will deal with background of the study explaining what drives the writer to analyze the chosen topic, the purpose or personal intention of the writer in writing the study, the significance of the study

describing what will be the study's contribution in an individual or a society, and presentation of research questions.

3. The Literary Review

This part of the study will examine the bases of theories (theoretical framework) used in the study and also what other researchers have found in the earlier studies. The theoretical views include some theories about reading comprehension, reading difficulties, analytical exposition text and reading strategies.

4. Methodology

This section presents the methods used in the study and also the details such as: who are involved, where the data are obtained, and how the data are collected.

5. Findings and Discussion

This chapter deals with the findings when the study or analysis is finished. The findings will be transcribed, analyzed, and finally discussed to answer the research question

6. Conclusion

This section will sum up all the information from the chapters and conclude an idea as the result of the analysis. In this section, suggestions for further research are also presented.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has discussed the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. The next chapter will elaborate the theoretical background as well as related research to be used as the foundation to develop a clear framework of the the formulation of the problem to be investigated.